



Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

Administration Building
3001 East Drive – Druid Hill Park
Thursday, July 20, 2013

*** MINUTES ***

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by President Aylesworth. This marks the first meeting held by the newly appointed Board.

Present:

Howard Aylesworth, President, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board			
Jabari Bush, Commissioner,	“	“	“
Melba Saunders,	“	“	“
*Vernon Reid,	“	“	“
Robert Clark,	“	“	“
Stephen Kearney,	“	“	“
Chris Ryer,	“	“	“
Betty Woods, Secretary,	“	“	
Gennady Schwartz, Chief of Capital Projects, Department of Recreation & Parks			
Bill Vondrasek, Chief of Parks,	“	“	“
Kenn King, Chief of Fiscal Services,	“	“	“
Bob Wall, Acting Chief of Recreation,	“	“	“
Valerie Scott-Oliver, Director’s Executive Asst.,	“	“	“
Kate Brower, Urban Planner, Capital Development	“	“	“
Bob Rhodes, Druid Hill Tennis Patron			
Greer Shorter, Baltimore Tennis Club			
Paul Baron, Vice President, Leon Day Foundation			
Valerie Conway-Hudson,	“	“	“
Michael Rosenband	“	“	“
Michelle Freeman,	“	“	“
Jo Orser, Friends of Gwynn Falls/Leakin Park			
Heide Grundmann,	“	“	“
Mellicent Aymold,	“	“	“
Michael Middleton, Cherry Hill Community Coalition			
Cathy Rosenbaum, Mt. Vernon Place Conservancy			
Guy Hager, Parks and People Foundation			
Barbara Jackson, Frankfurt Improvement Association			
Cheryl Glenn, Deputy Majority Whip, Maryland House of Delegates			
Paul (last name unknown), Teacher at Carver Tech			

*Mr. Reid also served as Commissioner on the former Advisory Board and expressed his pleasure on being reappointed.

Absent:

Ernest W. Burkeen, Jr., Director, Department of Recreation and Parks

Introduction of New Board Members and Goals: President Aylesworth welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Board members. Each one spoke of what they hope to accomplish during their tenure, and of the special interests they hope to pursue on behalf of the Department.

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As a result of conferences between the Board members and conversations with Mr. Burkeen, President Aylesworth explained that they will be operating somewhat differently than past Park Boards have done. They agreed on the following goals/changes:

- ❖ They will focus on higher level issues so they may be of increased value to the Department;
- ❖ Reports will no longer be required from each Division Chief, Again, the Board's focus will be on higher level issues, not the type of data that is more suitable for a staff meeting. The Director, however, will still be reporting on pertinent issues;
- ❖ The development of a better defined Department Mission Statement;
- ❖ Realizing that the Department does not receive the required resources to help make programs more dynamic and relevant, it is important to develop and seek stronger support and encourage better representation;
- ❖ The development of a comprehensive and strong Strategic Master Plan;
- ❖ Making efforts to assist in reestablishing stability within the Department;
- ❖ The importance of basic private/public partnerships with all the organizations that work in and around the parks. (President Aylesworth is the former President of the Friends of Herring Run Park and has been actively involved with the Herring Run Master Plan);
- ❖ Increase professionalism so that the Department can receive CAPRA accreditation through the National Recreation and Parks Association. This is a 2-year process during which a Department must meet strict standards of professionalism, which culminates in increased prestige and recognition for the qualifying Department of Recreation and Parks;
- ❖ Encouraging and supporting all efforts to involve young people in projects having to do with greenspace, whether it be enhancement, protection, maintenance, planting, landscaping, etc.
- ❖ Meetings will now be held the third Thursday of each month;
- ❖ The meeting time is now 5:30 p.m. to approximately 7:30 p.m.; and
- ❖ The location for all meetings will be the Dr. Ralph W.E. Jones, Jr. Building (Recreation and Parks Administration Headquarters), at 3001 East Drive (next to the park pool), in Druid Hill Park.

Naming of Leon Day Park Field House: Paul Baron, Vice President of the Leon Day Foundation, came to the meeting to request the Board's recommendation to approve naming the field house in honor of the late Betty Hawkins. Mrs. Hawkins was known for her many civic and charitable acts over many years of service to the city and her community. She worked tirelessly to secure many improvements for Leon Day Park and was instrumental in securing NFL sponsorship for the football activity at the park. For the foregoing reasons, the Leon Day Foundation and the community are most anxious to name the field house in her honor.

President Aylesworth put forth the motion to recommend this request to Mr. Burkeen, Commissioner Reid seconded it, and the Board's approval was unanimous. The next step will be for the Director to write a support letter for this naming to Councilman Welch (Councilman for that District), who then must introduce an Ordinance to this effect to the City Council for their vote.

Mr. Baron asked that special attention be paid to this request because they would very much like to announce it at a community festival that is planned for August 30th.

In-Depth Aquatic Study: Kate Brower, who works with Capital Planning and Development, has been working on an Aquatics Plan and has held several meetings this summer. An inventory of the pools is being done with emphasis on inspection and a complete review on what has worked and what has

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not. An Aquatic Advisory Committee was formed in May and during their meetings they discussed the policy and function of the plan. Several meetings over the summer will be taking place and Ms. Brower said she will be reporting to the Board in September or October to give the committee's final recommendations for a 10-year plan.

Open Discussion

Jo Orser/BGE in Leakin Park: Jo Orser reported that she had observed workers conducting an acreage survey in Leakin Park this winter and when she questioned the workers they said they were to conduct surveying but were unaware of the source of authorization. She contacted the Department but no one knew anything about the operation, so she then contacted Councilwoman Holton. A letter from her office went to BGE and finally, an answer. It seems that BGE is replacing a line that runs along the stream in the Park and that notices will be forthcoming to the Department and homeowners announcing this plan. A meeting is being planned and Ms. Orser has requested that the Department make a strong stand concerning the use of public parkland without any confirmation that alternates are not available.

Much discussion followed that culminated in Mr. Vondrasek saying he will make some calls and find out definitely what is going on. He will then get back to everyone with the results.

Mr. Michael Middleton/Recreation in Cherry Hill: Mr. Middleton congratulated the Board on their appointments, and enthusiastically supported the new goals they have set. He also was pleased at the change in meeting times, as was the opinion of most of those in attendance.

Mr. Middleton did express his disappointment in the lack of recreation facilities in the Cherry Hill area. He commented that the need for recreation should be a year-round offering, not restricted to summer only with the opening of the pools. Mr. Middleton also feels that recreation is not given the status of importance that it deserves because, in his opinion (widely held by others), it is *imperative* that recreational opportunities be provided for today's youth so that their leisure time is not spent on illegal and detrimental activities. He is hoping that Recreation and Parks will be able to fill that void in the very near future.

Barbara Jackson/Recreational Issues: Ms. Jackson also agreed on the importance of recreation availability to communities, and cited many comments she has heard by residents stating they would like to go back to counties because of the lack of recreation. In her area, the community came together to do a clean-up of Moore's Run. They worked very hard to make it presentable, but there is no effort made by the City to keep it clean. Ms. Jackson said DPW is working on a project to get some students involved in this neighborhood project. She believes the City does not consider Moore's Run a "legitimate park," but homeowners are concerned about parks in their area, as well as Herring Run.

Ms. Jackson's other concern is the absence of swings in the Parkside playground. She said the Master Plan stipulated that everything would be replaced. The park was redone but still the swings have not been replaced and they are very missed. Mr. Schwartz promised to look into it and get back to her.

Heide Grundmann/Division Reports: Ms. Grundmann expressed her opinion that she found the reports previously given by Division Chiefs informative, and hoped that the Board would reconsider not having them. President Aylesworth assured her that although Mr. Burkeen was unable to attend this particular meeting, he would be making a report at future meetings and his report will be sufficient. He

reiterated the fact that this Board will be considering higher level issues, thereby getting to the heart of matters, and which negates the need to hear material more suitable for a departmental staff meeting. This Board wants to put its time to the very best possible use.

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Praise for Michael Rosenband: A young man named Paul, who is a community worker in the Carver Tech School neighborhood, spoke of the selfless contribution that Mr. Rosenband is making to the youth in that neighborhood by getting them deeply involved in the sport of baseball. Most of the young boys have never experienced playing baseball but thanks to his efforts, they are now deeply involved and loving it! It should be pointed out that Mr. Rosenband has financed this activity to a great extent with his own funds, even purchasing a 15-passenger van so that the team would have transportation to the various sites and games. He is to be applauded for inspiring the young boys on his team, and doing so out of a good, caring heart and a desire to make life so much better for so many!

Paul has been an integral part of this whole endeavor and takes great pleasure to see that spark of interest in a sport many of the boys have never played, ignite a burning interest and desire to excel. He makes sure they get to their games and coaches them, as well. He uses his own time and money to achieve and maintain this very constructive and positive activity for these young boys who are developing a real love for baseball.

State Delegate Cheryl Glenn: It was a pleasure to count Delegate Glenn among the attendees. She came to listen and enjoyed the meeting, which she found most interesting. Delegate Glenn shared Mr. Middleton's concern about the lack of recreation facilities in some critical areas. She cited the fact that kids in her area had to travel 2.5 miles to get to the nearest recreation center. Delegate Glenn realizes that a shortage of funding is a serious barrier to expansion, but feels the welfare of kids should be a definite priority.

A Thank You: Mr. Rhodes expressed his appreciation to Ms. Woods for the timely notices of the Board's meetings, and of the "reminder" notices that follow as well.

Next Meeting Date: resident Aylesworth announced that the next meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board will be on Thursday, September 19th, here at 3001 East Drive, at 5:30 p.m. The month of August will be reserved for planned vacations, enjoyment of summer's wind-down, and any other pleasures that warm weather inspires.

Adjournment: President Aylesworth adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Betty M. Woods

Secretary
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board